

SWEET AUBURN

Magazine of the Friends of Mount Auburn | FALL 2007



EXPANDING OUR EDUCATIONAL OUTREACH

SWEET AUBURN

A publication of the
Friends of Mount Auburn Cemetery

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Cover: Sixth graders from the Atrium School, Watertown, MA, took a field trip to Mount Auburn in October 2007, to study the effects of acid rain and snow on marble monuments.

Photo by Jennifer Johnston

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The Friends of Mount Auburn Cemetery was established in 1986 to assist in the conservation of the Cemetery's natural beauty and to promote the appreciation of its cultural, historic and natural resources. Organized in 1990 as a 501(c)3 non-profit charitable trust, the Friends seeks financial support from its members, other individuals, foundations, corporations and public agencies. It receives gifts for educational and interpretive programs and materials for the public, specific cultural projects, and operating support for horticultural rejuvenation and the preservation of the historic monuments, structures, and archival artifacts and records. The Friends has over 1,200 active members.

President's Corner

This issue of **Sweet Auburn** is largely devoted to the theme of education at Mount Auburn which, as a still-functioning cemetery that is also an historic landscape, offers so many opportunities for learning. And it has done so since its very beginnings. Blanche Linden, in the revised and redesigned edition of **Silent City on a Hill: Landscapes of Memory and Boston's Mount Auburn Cemetery** (now available at the Cemetery with a discount for Friends members), describes how Mount Auburn's founders intended that it would inspire the living as well as bury the dead. While they did not talk specifically of "education," they did hope that the monuments and landscape would prompt visitors to reflect on history, mortality and the need to honor the heroes of the new republic. Indeed commemoration can be seen as a form of education. In his consecration address of September 24, 1831, now more than 176 years ago, Justice Joseph Story enumerated the many ways in which the new cemetery would instruct the living. In its many subsequent decades the Cemetery's visitors have learned from and been inspired by the stories of those resting here, the horticulture so beautifully arrayed across its topography, and the art and architecture of three centuries, both public and private, distributed throughout the grounds.

With the founding of the Friends in 1986, the Cemetery became more intentional about emphasizing education as part of its mission, gradually increasing the ways it shares knowledge of this place with visitors, clients, and researchers. Most of our programs are on-site, but in the just completed 175th Anniversary year we reached a larger and more diverse public through our many off-site events and through our website.

This winter we will open the long-awaited Visitors Center, which will further expand our educational outreach, and we are also increasing our efforts to share information about the many services that Mount Auburn offers to those who have lost a loved one—finding a final resting-place, arranging a burial and/or cremation, planning a funeral or memorial service, and designing a monument. And, as Mount Auburn did during the 19th century, we continue to share knowledge with professional colleagues, from the Boston area, around the country, even, from the other side of the world.

Bill Clendaniel

William C. Clendaniel, President



Bill Clendaniel

PHOTO © MICHAEL DWYER



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A NEW AMERICAN LANDSCAPE

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ount Auburn Cemetery was the expression of a new idea.

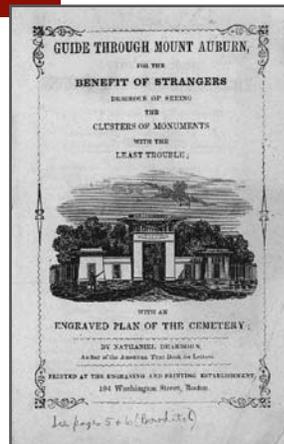
Before 1831, most Americans were buried in isolated plots or in crowded town graveyards. Mount Auburn's founders had a new vision. They designed a tranquil, natural setting, well outside the city, to bury and commemorate the dead and to inspire and comfort the living. This principle continues to guide the Cemetery's management and use today.

Over time, Mount Auburn responded to changing ideas about burial, mourning, and even death itself. The landscapes of different sections in this Cemetery illustrate customs in American society over nearly two centuries.

These exhibits will help you
"read" the landscape of Mount Auburn
and discover some of the personal, family,
and national history you can find here.

New Visitors Center Increases Educational Outreach

Panels from the new Visitors Center exhibit in Story Chapel make use of text and images from three centuries, including, below right, an early guide (1844) to Mount Auburn.



Dramatically Increasing Visitors' Understanding of Mount Auburn

By STEPHEN H. ANABLE,
Communications Coordinator & Writer

Mount Auburn Cemetery has been an outdoor museum—and more—for over a century and a half. Now, with the opening of its new Visitors Center this December, its own history and place in American history will be put into a new, more comprehensive context for the public. The Center, located in Story Chapel just inside the Mount Auburn Street entrance, inaugurates a new chapter in Mount Auburn's commitment to education. Its goal is to educate visitors about the complexity of the landscape and explain why the grounds—the monuments, plantings and roadways—look the way they do. It will help visitors "read" that landscape, learning how and why it has changed over time, demonstrating how Mount Auburn can be explored as a series of "period rooms." And the Center will track the extraordinary influence Mount Auburn has had on the design of other cemeteries and as the "ancestor" of all of the nation's public parks—including Central Park in New York and the Mall in Washington, D.C.

(cont'd)



(Left and below) During the past several months, classes from a number of schools visited the Cemetery, including the Atrium School in Wattertown and the Shady Hill School, Haggerty School and Dragonfly Afterschool Program, all from Cambridge. Photos by Jennifer Johnston



The Friends has offered the public a variety of programs for decades, but the Center's exhibits knit much of this knowledge together, explaining how the Cemetery developed—and how it reflects changing views

The new Center includes a reception desk manned with staff or docents and offering interpretive materials and publications for sale, a nine-minute introductory video, freestanding and mounted display panels, and a resource table. The exhibits were designed by the PRD Group of Chantilly, VA, which has worked with the United States Botanic Garden, the Smithsonian American Art Museum, the Texas State History Museum, and other important cultural organizations.

The Center can “dramatically increase visitors’ understanding of Mount Auburn,” says Director of Education & Visitor Services Bree Harvey. “Opening the Visitors Center is the next big step in continuing to expand our educational outreach to ‘students’ of all ages, from children in school to adults who are lifelong learners. For years we and others have known that Mount Auburn is an ideal setting for experiential learning; the Visitors Center will help all visitors learn more and gain a greater appreciation of what is here.”

Janet Heywood, former Vice President of Interpretive Programs and the principal instigator for the Center, says, “It’s very exciting to finally have a wide array of educational displays and materials available in Story Chapel for the Cemetery’s many visitors. It’s gratifying to think that we are continuing the desires of the founders to create a ‘place for the living’ to ‘teach the lessons of history.’” Janet worked with President Bill Clendaniel to make the Center a reality, writing grants, doing research, organizing roundtables with visiting scholars, and selecting and working with the exhibit designers. Bree emphasizes that while we hope the Center’s materials will be informative and interesting, “Janet always said that its success would be measured by how much it encourages people to go outside and explore the landscape in new ways. The heart of the exhibit is not in Story Chapel; it’s out on the grounds.”



about death, commemoration, religion, nature, community, and individualism. The Center is the product of a great deal of work by staff and two separate advisory committees of outside experts from the museum and public history worlds. Funding for the project came from major planning and implementation grants from the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH), and additional grants from the Massachusetts Foundation for the Humanities, and the Anthony J. and Mildred D. Ruggiero Memorial Trust. To ready Story Chapel for its additional duties and “increased traffic,” a handicapped-accessible rest room and air-conditioning were added. All of the Center’s display panels and new furniture—resource table, reception desk, and storage

cabinets—were meticulously designed by PRD to complement Story Chapel’s historic interior. Some of the furniture is designed to move, allowing the area where the exhibit is housed to be used for seating, if necessary, for the funerals and memorial services that will continue to be held in Story Chapel. (The Visitors Center will be closed when services take place.)

The Center’s display panels discuss how changes in taste changed the Mount Auburn landscape. For example, iron fencing was used to delineate family lots only to be replaced by granite curbing which itself was eventually removed. The panels detail how monuments were fashioned from marble, granite and other materials, and describe their evolving styles and symbolism. The exhibit discusses how the Cemetery acquired land during the late-19th and early-20th century when formally trained urban planners, landscape designers and architects replaced the gifted pioneers who had filled those roles early in the Cemetery’s history. Bree points out

that “there are also panels that describe contemporary Mount Auburn places of burial, such as Spruce Knoll and Halcyon Gardens. We also cover the history of cremation at Mount Auburn, which had the first crematory located in a cemetery in Massachusetts.”

The resource table holds books covering the many facets of Mount Auburn, including guides to New England’s birds and trees. Staff and docents are available to help specialized groups when needed, for example, showing videos about bird identification when thousands of bird watchers converge here each spring during migration season.

School children are one target audience for the Visitors Center. Students and teachers from a number of schools in the area, public and private, such as the Haggerty and Shady Hill Schools in Cambridge and the Atrium School in Watertown, visit Mount Auburn on a regular basis, and we hope they will find the new Center useful. “They come in on their own, doing lessons that are often nature-focused, like sketching, bird-watching and looking at turtles and frogs in the ponds,” Bree says. “But we want to let more teachers know that we are here and can supplement



what they are covering on virtually any subject.” Dates of birth and death engraved on monuments can teach math, the three-dimensional forms of monuments geometry, and the horticultural collection biology, evolution and geography—such as the fact that many plants native to New England, located in the northeastern portion of North America, are related to plants that live in the northeastern portion of Asia, in places such as Japan and Korea.

What in the Visitors Center will most surprise first-time and veteran visitors? “It could be the same answer for both groups,” Bree says, “the fact that Mount Auburn is the inspiration for all the public parks in this country.” Some visitors assume that Frederick Law Olmsted had a hand in shaping Mount Auburn’s hills, vistas, ponds and roads, but the reverse might be true, because the famed landscape architect responsible for Boston’s Emerald Necklace and New York’s Central Park was still a boy when Jacob Bigelow and Henry Dearborn designed this natural landscape enhanced by art—the first designed landscape open to the public in North America. The other surprise for many visi-

*(Above) Photographs (c. 1870) of Asa Gray Garden, top, and the Sphinx at Bigelow Chapel
(Below) Friends of Mount Auburn members on a guided walk on biodiversity, at the Butterfly Garden near Willow Pond, August 2007 Photo by Jennifer Johnston*



tors may be that Mount Auburn is still an active cemetery: selling new interment space and cremating and interring people after 175 years.

Bree believes that visitors may also be surprised by the fact that Mount Auburn is not exclusively used by any one group or religion—nor is it just for the elite. In his lectures Bill Clendaniel is fond of saying: “Longfellow is buried at Mount Auburn and so is the blacksmith he wrote his famous poem about.” Many people of modest means are buried at Mount Auburn. Being largely located in Watertown, many Armenians are buried here and many Jews, Hindus and Buddhists, and we are beginning to have Muslims. The Cemetery is the burial place of many African Americans, including prominent figures from the 19th, 20th, and 21st-century. Bree notes that the Cemetery has

never tracked racial, religious or demographic information: “We know a person buried here is African American, for instance, only if they led some sort of public life.”

Mount Auburn’s commitment to education is reflected in Bree’s new title as Director of Education & Visitor Services and expanded duties and in the building of the new Visitors Center. As Bill Clendaniel says: “We want to make a visit to Mount Auburn as enriching as possible for all visitors, whatever their age or background and whether they come here as a leisure visitor or a client. Mount Auburn is an incredible community and national treasure, and it is our obligation and wish to share all of what we have learned about this place with all who come to find solace or recreation.”

STORIES BEHIND THE STONES: *A Mount Auburn Cemetery Love Story*

BRIAN A. SULLIVAN, *Archivist*



PHOTOS BY BRIANA SULLIVAN

EVERY MONUMENT AT MOUNT AUBURN COMMEMORATES a life—whether short or long—and evidence of these lives sometimes survives in archives in the Boston area. At Harvard University, a leather-bound ledger includes the student memoir¹ of Vincent Yardley Bowditch (1852–1929), Harvard College Class of 1875. In it, he recalled two people that he had loved and lost, and who had loved each other: his brother, Nathaniel, a 2nd lieutenant in the 1st Massachusetts Calvary, who died in the Civil War, and Nathaniel’s fiancée, Katharine Day Putnam. Nathaniel “took part in our important battles,” Vincent wrote, “until Kelley’s Ford, Virginia—while leading a cavalry charge he was surprised and surrounded by the enemy, his horse was shot from under him and he finally fell, mortally wounded... He died the following day, November 18, 1863, in the 24th year of his age.”

Katharine Day Putnam, “Nat’s Kate” as she was called, was beloved by the Bowditch family. After Nathaniel’s death, his father, Dr. Henry Ingersoll Bowditch (1808–1892), wrote that he looked upon her “as an adopted child.”²

On June 19, 1864, Dr. Bowditch confided to Katharine: “I must write to thank you for the sweet note you wrote to me previously to my visit to place our dear boy-hero’s monument over his remains at Mount Auburn... His presence was all around me—all nature was most lovely and I watched the first shadows cast by the sword that this is to mark the spot, I trust, for many long

years... I could not tear myself away from the spot, but lingered and lingered...”

By the autumn of 1874, Katharine was succumbing to tuberculosis. In a December 13, 1874, letter to his wife, Dr. Bowditch described his final meeting with Katharine: “She was very sweet and her eyes lighted up with the peculiarly beautiful luster it always has on meeting anyone she loves.”

“Doctor dear, I am slipping gradually away,” she told him, and—pointing to her ring finger—said, “I want you to put that ring... along side of that which you have [Nathaniel’s ring]—this Nat put on my finger when I gave him that which you now have. You will take it when the time comes—will you not?”

On February 2, 1875, Katharine Day Putnam died. “She was about seventeen when my brother died,” Vincent Bowditch recalled. “She lived for twelve years after him, true to her first love... On the 5th of February she was buried from Emmanuel Church on Newbury Street where twelve years before the body of my brother was also taken. They were both laid in Mount Auburn Cemetery although not side by side.”

Here, in *Sweet Auburn*, we are pleased to feature their stones as they would have wished, “side by side.”



(Above, upper right) Monument to Nathaniel Bowditch, Tulip Path

(Above) Monument to Katharine Day Putnam, Bellwort Path

¹ Harvard College Class of 1875 Class Book, Harvard University Archives

² Papers of Katharine Day Putnam, Massachusetts Historical Society, Call # MS. N-76

HORTICULTURE AT MOUNT AUBURN UNDER THE SPOTLIGHT

BY DAVID P. BARNETT, *Vice President of Operations & Horticulture*

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF MOUNT AUBURN'S PLANT collections and the Cemetery's high standards of horticultural management have been recognized in several ways during 2007.

Horticultural Roundtable, April 2007: Some of the country's leading botanic garden professionals and horticulture experts came to a day-long "roundtable" meeting on April 9 to offer recommendations regarding strengths, weaknesses and future directions for our tree, shrub and groundcover collections. The meeting was scheduled to coincide with Dan Hinkley's part of the 175th Anniversary lecture series at the Boston Public Library. In addition to Dan, a celebrated West Coast horticulturist, plant explorer and author, invited experts included Paul Meyer, the director of the Morris Arboretum in Philadelphia; Rick Lewandowski, the director of the Mt. Cuba Center in Delaware; Peter Del Tredici of the Arnold Arboretum; and Peter Bristol, a retired curator from the Chicago Botanic Garden. Mount Auburn Trustees Tom Cooper, Louise Weed and Bill Clendaniel, along with staff members Dennis Collins, Claude Benoit, Paul Walker and I, also attended.

After a tour of the grounds, the group came up with wide-ranging recommendations for enhancing the collections and the landscape, many of which fit nicely with the principles in our 1993 Master Plan and our ongoing initiatives to use ecologically-sensitive horticultural maintenance practices. These recommendations included: devising policies on managing invasive plant species; creating and maintaining vistas throughout the grounds; increasing the plantings of massed shrubs and groundcovers in the "naturalistic parkland" landscape character zones; and increasing the horticultural diversity of our collections by adding new species and cultivars to groups such as oaks and magnolias, already plentiful on the grounds. All of the attendees commented on the Cemetery's overall beauty, tranquility and high standards of maintenance.

North American Plant Collections Consortium (NAPCC): In August Mount Auburn was invited to be one of 15 institutions forming a national collection of oaks (*Quercus*) under the NAPCC program. The consortium, a joint venture of the American Public Gardens Association (APGA) and the United States Department of Agriculture, will help participants "maximize the potential of their collections, by making efficient use of available resources through a coordinated continent-wide approach and strengthening their own collections through collaboration with others."

To join, an organization must have a valuable stock of plant species germplasm (genetic material), a commitment

to conservation and preservation, high standards of collections management, and well-documented plant records. Mount Auburn's Horticultural Curator Dennis Collins played the lead role in coordinating the efforts of 15 botanical gardens to produce one comprehensive database containing the oak species represented in their collections and then submitted this application to the NAPCC, the first multi-institution application it has received. Our acceptance into the consortium signifies national recognition of the importance of Mount Auburn's plant collections, particularly our diverse collection of oaks, many of which pre-date the founding of Mount Auburn in 1831.



Members of the American Public Gardens Association in front of Bigelow Chapel during the Plant Collections Symposium co-hosted by Mount Auburn and Harvard University's Arnold Arboretum, October 4-5, 2007. Photo by Jennifer Johnston

Collections Symposium, October 2007:

Mount Auburn and the Arnold Arboretum co-hosted a Symposium on October 4-5 in partnership with the American Public Gardens Association. Attended by over 100 botanical garden professionals from throughout the United States and Canada, this two-day program focused on the essentials of plant collections management and curation. Plenary sessions explored creating a collections policy and effective approaches to collections planning. Dennis Collins gave a well-received presentation on Mount Auburn's ten-year process to establish a state-of-the-art program for documenting, mapping and labeling our plant collections.

CLAUDE BENOIT, DIRECTOR OF HORTICULTURE, RETIRES

BY STEPHEN H. ANABLE, *Communications Coordinator & Writer*

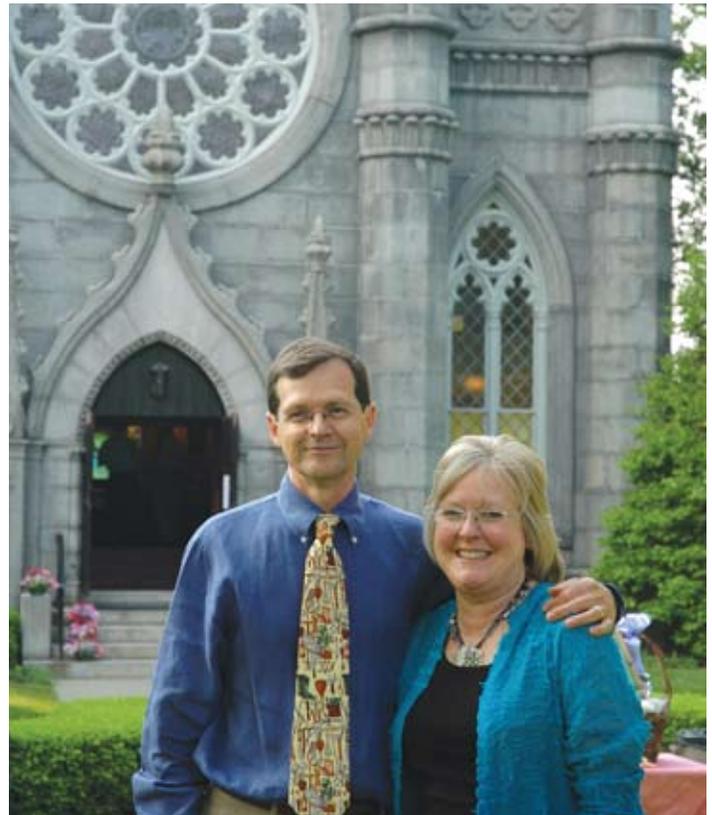
CLAUDE BENOIT, MOUNT AUBURN'S DIRECTOR OF Horticulture, retired in May after 35 of years of literally making things bloom. He inaugurated and witnessed many changes throughout a creative career that saw the Cemetery's landscape transformed.

The Mount Auburn of Claude's first years seems as distant as Richard Nixon and the platform shoe. "We had one off-road vehicle and now we probably have 41, including 14 electric carts," Claude recalls. Today, work is done far more efficiently, thanks to mechanical means of transporting supplies such as bark mulch and loam. During the 1970s, many large flowering and shade trees had been allowed to grow branches that dipped down almost to the ground, interfering with mowing. Claude spent "a couple of years" cutting away this excess growth, benefiting the preservation of nearby monuments, a bonus not fully appreciated at that time.

Claude cites his work in the restoration of Consecration Dell—stocking it with plants native to New England—as his most meaningful accomplishment at Mount Auburn. Although other places were filling landscapes with native plants in the early 1990s, Claude believes that Mount Auburn was a pioneer because of the scale of our efforts: "It was very difficult to get some plants native to New England in those days. We got some native groundcovers from Colorado because no one here was growing them." Claude designed Holly Garden on Birch Avenue and the Butterfly Garden at Willow Pond and created countless additional smaller "gardens" for both the Cemetery and private lot owners. He installed Victorian-style plants in the area from the Bowditch statue to Bigelow Chapel, and, offsite, designed and created the beautiful garden at the intersection of Mount Auburn Street and Aberdeen Avenue in Cambridge.

A less happy milestone during Claude's years was a bizarre *Wizard of Oz*-like night during the 1970s when a small tornado plowed through the operations yard, crossed Cambridge Cemetery, and finally dissipated after churning up the Charles River. Mount Auburn's tallest tree was a casualty, but, miraculously, no monuments were destroyed. And, on April 1, 1997, an ice storm did "tremendous damage" to flowering-size and under-story trees that Claude and his team spent days cleaning up.

"As the primary staff landscape designer for the past several years, Claude certainly leaves a wonderful horticultural legacy, but what I appreciate and will miss just as much is the impact he has had on the staff," says Vice President of Operations & Horticulture David Barnett. "He always took



Claude and Linda Benoit at his retirement party on Bigelow Chapel Lawn, June 5, 2007. Photo by Jennifer Johnston

great pride in his team's accomplishments and managed to instill this pride and dedication in all who worked for him."

Claude grew up in Leominster, MA. With his three brothers and two sisters, he worked at the family-owned furniture store. During high school, he took a summer job on a farm that yielded a bountiful harvest in two major ways. Claude met his future wife, Linda—and got bitten by the botany bug. He went on to earn a B.S. in plant and soil science from UMass in 1970.

At their home in Littleton, MA, Claude and Linda tend a garden that mixes trees, shrubs, perennials and vegetables. The Benois have two children: Ben, who lives in Littleton with his wife, Robin, and their seven-year-old daughter, Gabrielle—and a daughter, Bethany, who lives with her husband, Jonathan, in Ayer. When Claude wants to leave his garden and terra firma he can do so in the kayak the Mount Auburn staff bought him as a retirement gift. But the Cemetery is still tapping Claude's expertise, even in "retirement." He is the project manager for the design and installation of the Wildflower Meadow around Washington Tower—one more part of his legacy at Mount Auburn.



(Left) Preservation Initiative Task Force members inspect the Hygeia monument; June 2007; (l to r) monument conservator Ivan Myjer, Mount Auburn President Bill Clendaniel, Executive Director of the Cambridge Historical Commission Charles Sullivan, preservation staff member David Gallagher, architect Henry Moss, and Executive Assistant Linda Fisher. Photo by Meg Winslow

(Above, l to r) National Park Service historian and conservator Dennis Montagna, Meg Winslow and Mount Auburn's Preservation Planner Natalie Wampler, May 2007. Photo by Jennifer Johnston

PRESERVATION INITIATIVE IN FULL SWING

AS THE STEWARD OF ONE OF THE NATION'S MOST historic designed landscapes, Mount Auburn has an obligation and a vested interest in maintaining our beautiful grounds—the built as well as the horticultural elements. But after more than 150 years of use and exposure to weather, many of the Cemetery's structures are increasingly in need of professional care. The obligation to maintain or preserve our structures was recognized as an essential part of Mount Auburn's mission in 1993 by the Trustees, and over the years since much preservation work has been done. But the staff and the Buildings & Grounds Committee of the Trustees became increasingly concerned about the unmet needs and the lack of a well thought-out process of determining priorities.

Where to start? How much could and should we take on? Who would do the necessary work and how would it be funded?

Structures at Mount Auburn

- 38 buildings
(including mausolea)
- 44,000+ monuments
- 12 miles of road
- 70 miles of paths
- 4 miles of perimeter fence
- 62 iron lot fences

To answer these questions the Preservation Initiative was conceived in April to tackle a major task of the coming year—to “develop a comprehensive preservation philosophy and policies” covering all of the Cemetery's structures, which were defined as the built landscape elements owned by either the Cemetery or private individuals. In addition, the Task Force was charged with

surveying data from the Archives, databases and departmental files relating to the preservation of structures, creating the beginnings of a handbook of policies and procedures, and, perhaps most importantly, devising a planning tool for prioritizing and budgeting maintenance and preservation work.

Keeping to the schedule originally laid out in March, the Task Force has forwarded to the Cemetery's Trustees a *Statement of Values and Commitments for the Preservation of Structures*, which was reviewed at the Trustees Retreat in early November and will be voted on by the Board in December.

The Task Force—headed by Cambridge-based preservation architect/consultant Bill Barry of Heritage Planning & Design—consists of Cemetery Trustees Oliver Scholle and David Straus, seven preservation professionals: Shary Berg (a landscape historian who was a member of the 1993 Master Plan team); Dennis Montagna (director of the National Park Service's Monument Research and Preservation Program); Henry Moss (a preservation architect at Bruner/Cott of Cambridge, which designed the Cemetery's Preservation Services Building); Ivan Myjer (an architectural stone conservator who is currently consulting on Mount Auburn's new interment space, Birch Gardens); Charles Sullivan (executive director of the Cambridge Historical Commission); Wendall Kalsow (a preservation architect who led the recent restoration of Bigelow Chapel); and Liz Vizza (a landscape planner who has done much consulting at the Cemetery and who was the project manager of the 1993 Master Plan). The Task Force is aided by a Steering Committee of Mount Auburn's preservation staff and Bill Clendaniel, who has said that every one of those invited to be on the Task Force accepted without hesitation.

“If one of Mount Auburn's essential landscape features is its structures,” says Trustee Ollie Scholle, “then the work of the Preservation Initiative is of the utmost importance in ensuring that this National Historic Landmark will remain the wonderful resource it is for the commemoration of so many of the notables of our state and country and the enjoyment by our hundreds of thousands of visitors of the art and architecture of three centuries.”



COPYING BOOKS, RARE RECORDS OF CEMETERY OPERATIONS, CAPTURED FOR RESEARCH USE

BY MARGARET L. WINSLOW, *Curator of Historical Collections*, and BRIAN A. SULLIVAN, *Archivist*

A PROJECT THAT WILL HELP EDUCATORS AND RESEARCHERS for generations to come has just been completed: thousands of pages of outgoing correspondence, circa 1860 to 1925 contained in 65 volumes known as copying books have been captured with high-resolution digital images by Boston Photo Imaging. These irreplaceable, detailed copying books transport the reader back in time.

On March 31, 1902, James C. Scorgie, Superintendent of Mount Auburn Cemetery, wrote to Mrs. Julie Nevins of Washington, D.C., regarding her family lot on Eagle Avenue, the final resting-place of her husband, Henry C. Nevins: “Dear Madam, I went over to your lot yesterday (Easter) morning about 9 o’clock and found the three wreaths and cross there, and they were very beautiful. The Easter lilies of which the cross were made were the most perfect and largest lilies brought into Mount Auburn on that day.”

This touching note is one of many that provide evidence of the daily operations of the Cemetery and our staff’s ongoing dedication to an outstanding level of service. Mount Auburn collected and cared for, in separate lot folders, the early incoming correspondence from lot owners and tradespeople, but the Cemetery’s responses by superintendents and treasurers were hidden away in the pages of the deteriorating copying books. Copying these fading pages has been one of our highest preservation priorities for many years. We are now thrilled to be able to make this information available to staff and researchers. In 2006, a generous donation allowed the project to get underway and time was of the essence. The books’ leather bindings were powdery with red rot, making handling them impossible, and, inside, the ink was becoming illegible.

An initial survey of the newly available letters has already yielded intriguing information. For example, they show that Cemetery staff consistently warned lot owners that



The Cemetery’s fragile and fading copying books, historical volumes demonstrating ongoing correspondence from Mount Auburn to lot owners and tradesmen circa 1860-1925, have been digitally captured for use in research. The type of letterpress in these copying book documents represents a means of producing copies other than longhand duplicates. The original letter was transferred to a page by a process of blotting ink. Photos by Meg Winslow

marble monuments were destined to deteriorate in the harsh New England environment. In 1889, Superintendent James W. Lovering wrote to a Mrs. R.A. Vinal stating: “None of the marbles stand well out of doors, and the more elaborate the work the greater the liability to decay.”

Few cemetery records have survived to this extent. Our collections offer an extraordinary snapshot of commemorative and horticultural practices from the Victorian era well into the 20th century that will be mined in the years ahead by our staff as well as scholars. The copying book digitization project will be precedent-setting—a model that Mount Auburn staff will consult when planning to preserve other significant archival collections.

LOUIS AGASSIZ, TO MONSIEUR WITH LOVE

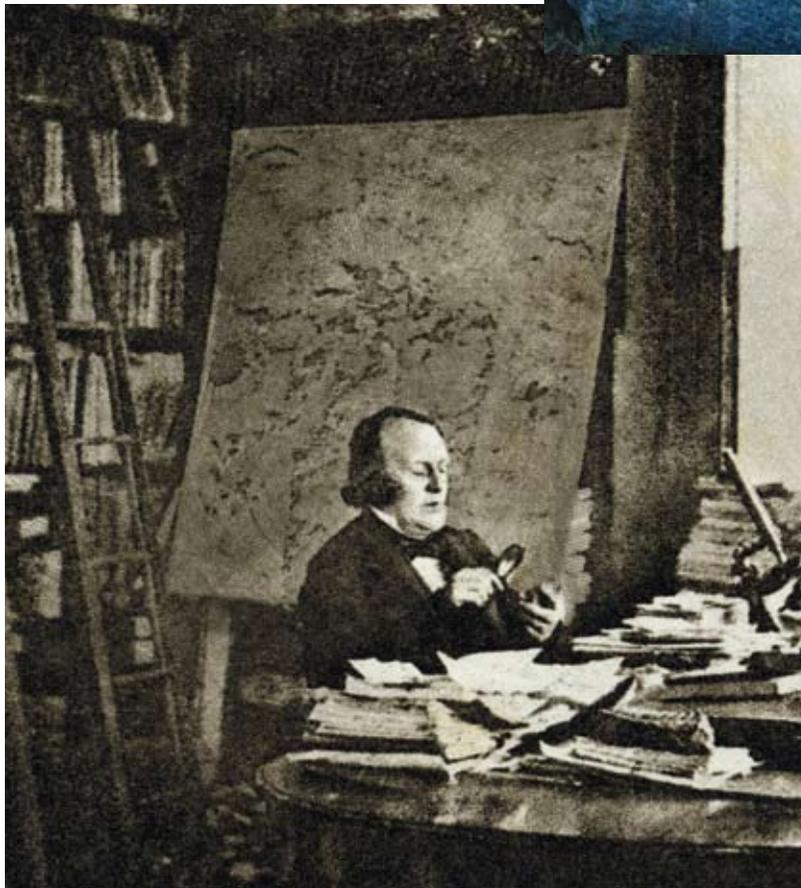
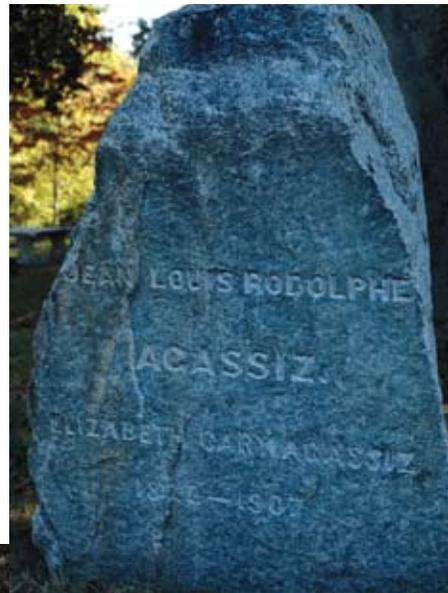
BY BREE D. HARVEY, *Director of Education & Visitor Services*

THIS YEAR MARKS THE 200TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE BIRTH of naturalist and educator Jean Louis Rodolphe Agassiz. Born the son of a Protestant clergyman in Switzerland, Louis Agassiz studied medicine and natural history at universities in Europe. Upon graduation he produced a colossal work on fossil fishes—identifying and illustrating more than 1,200 species at a time when few fossil fish had even been named. In 1840, after studying the movement of the Aar glacier in Switzerland, he published what is considered his most important scientific work, *Études sur les glaciers* (*Studies of Glaciers*). This introduced his idea of the “Ice Age,” a period when much of the globe was enveloped with thick sheets of ice.

By the time he immigrated to America in 1846, he was already a well-known naturalist.

Upon arriving in this country Agassiz was invited to Boston to deliver a series of scientific lectures at the Lowell Institute. The following year he accepted a newly created professorship in natural history at Harvard’s Lawrence Scientific School. Agassiz modernized the study of the natural world at Harvard by encouraging his students to use the outdoors as their scientific laboratory and to rely on first-hand observation when doing their research rather than on rote memorization. His interest in expanding Harvard’s collection of zoological specimens led to his founding the Museum of Comparative Zoology in 1859. Agassiz donated his personal collection of specimen fish, insects, and other species gathered from travels to the museum’s collection.

In 1850 Agassiz married Elizabeth Cary, the sister-in-law of Cornelius Felton, the Greek scholar who later became Harvard president. Like her husband, Elizabeth Agassiz was



(Above, right) A boulder from his native Switzerland marks the Mount Auburn grave of Louis Agassiz (1807-1873) in the Bellwort Path family lot of his wife Elizabeth Cary Agassiz, also buried there. Photo by Jennifer Johnston.

(Above) Louis Agassiz in his library, 1861 (from *Life, Letters, and Works of Louis Agassiz*, MacMillan and Co., New York, 1896).

deeply interested in education. Between 1856 and 1865, the couple ran a small school for girls, known as the Agassiz School, in their Cambridge home. Agassiz taught the school’s science courses and recruited several of his Harvard colleagues to offer lessons in other subjects.

Agassiz continued his studies in zoology, taking part in maritime surveys along the Atlantic and Pacific coasts and participating in a two-year expedition to Brazil. He died in December 1873 and was buried at Mount Auburn in the Cary family lot with members of his wife’s family. A 2,500-pound boulder from the Aar Glacier near the site of his geological

studies—a gift by the Republic of Switzerland—was placed at his grave as his monument. After her husband’s death, Elizabeth Agassiz championed the cause of education for young women. Her efforts eventually led to the founding of Radcliffe College.

BIRCH GARDENS IS TAKING SHAPE

BY CANDACE CURRIE, *Director of Planning & Cemetery Development*

BIRCH GARDENS—MOUNT AUBURN'S INNOVATIVE yet classic new interment landscape—is steadily taking shape. The beautifully carved details on the nine granite inscription panels have been completed (see photograph below), and soon the panels will be connected together by ornamental iron fencing featuring finials resembling those on the original fencing at the Cemetery's Mount Auburn Street entrance. The foundation and some elements of the reflecting pool and gentle waterfall are now installed. You can already see how Birch Gardens is at once an elegant and monumental addition to our historic landscape. And, this fall, the autumn color of the trees left in place in Birch Gardens has been spectacular. When we add thousands of plants in the spring of 2008, the area will become another magnificent garden space.

As described in the Spring 2007 *Sweet Auburn*, Birch Gardens will provide space directly in front of the inscription panels for both casket and cremation burials. As the inventory of new burial space at Mount Auburn dwindles, we wanted to create a new landscape at the edge of the Cemetery using available land along Coolidge Avenue and provide privacy by replacing the existing 1980s fence with something more beautiful, dignified and permanent. We wanted to create a shared memorial that also gives families the opportunity to have individualized inscriptions to commemorate their loved ones, all in keeping with the high standards consistently achieved at Mount Auburn.

Each of Birch Gardens' granite panels will form a garden room, taking its character from the existing trees that have been carefully preserved and from the many trees and shrubs that will be added in the future. The siting of the panels took into account not only the existing trees but also the views of the Cambridge City Cemetery on the other side of Coolidge Avenue. To further enhance the aesthetics of the site, the utility lines along the street will be put underground.



Birch Gardens from a rendering by Halvorson Design Partnership, Boston.

The concept for Birch Gardens came from Mount Auburn's award-winning 1993 Master Plan. Granite used in the memorial was chosen for its durability, warm earth tones and ability to be successfully inscribed. The stone also

has a low water absorption rate that will reduce leaching of any mortar. Called "Canadian Mahogany" or "Red Deer Brown," the granite comes from the geologic area known as the Canadian shield that is estimated to be approximately 3.8 billion years old. The stone is quarried at Nelson Granite, a family-owned business in operation since 1909 in Vermilion Bay, northwestern Ontario. Like all granites, it is composed mainly of feldspar and quartz. When the sun shines on it, the crystals in the granite glisten, enlivening the surface of the panels.

We expect to open the project for sale during

late spring 2008. We will hold a formal dedication in the fall, when the new turf, groundcovers, perennials, shrubs and trees have taken hold. If you would like more information about Birch Gardens, please email info@mountauburn.org. Birch Gardens promises to be a striking 21st-century addition to the nation's first landscaped cemetery, still allowing us to provide new burial space for families 176 years after our founding.

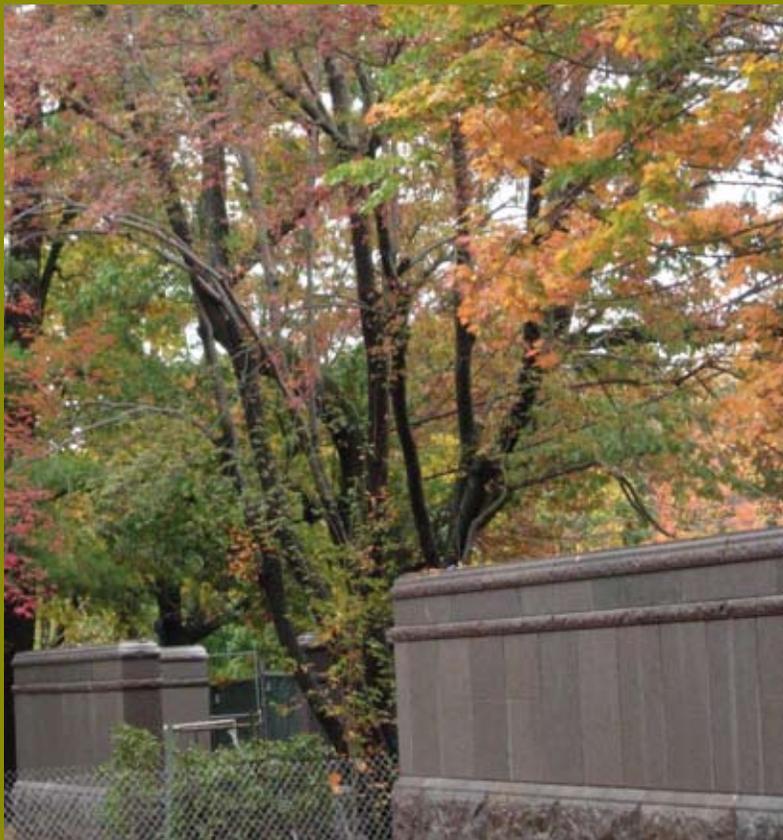


PHOTO BY CANDACE CURRIE



(Left) A reception takes place in July under a tent on Bigelow Chapel Lawn following a celebration of the life of a prominent environmentalist, educator and lawyer.



(Below) After the service a New Orleans jazz band led the procession of family and friends to the reception on Bigelow Chapel Lawn.



Honoring the People You Love in the Way You Wish

Mount Auburn works to accommodate the diverse wishes of families when honoring people they love at the end of life. The Cemetery has facilities for funerals, memorial services, and receptions, including two historic chapels. Additional information about Cemetery Services can be obtained by calling 617-547-7105 or emailing at info@mountauburn.org

(Above, left) An Honor Guard marches at the interment service for Spc. Nicholas A. Peters of Somerville, MA, a veteran of the Iraq war who won the Iraq Campaign Medal, Army Commendation Medal, Army Achievement Medal, National Defense Medal and Global War on Terrorism Service Medal.

(Left) The Honor Guard stands at attention at the September 2007 funeral of Spc. Peters.

PHOTO COURTESY OF THE LEE FAMILY



(Right) Funeral service in May 2007 of Mrs. Ho Re Lee, a leader in Boston's Korean-American community and a founding member of the Berkland Baptist Church, which ministers to Asian-American college students, graduate students and young adults in the Boston area.

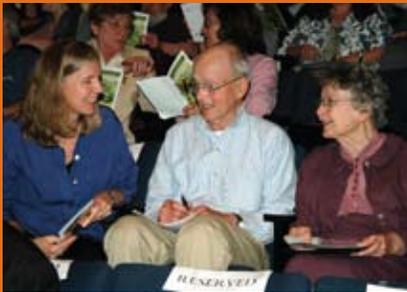


175th Anniversary Concludes

April 24, 2007, “The Pleasure, Art and Science of Birding,” the sixth in the free seven-lecture series, “Facets of Mount Auburn,” held at the Boston Public Library during Mount Auburn’s 175th Anniversary celebration year, featured Norman Smith, Director of Massachusetts Audubon Society’s Blue Hills Trailside Museum in Milton, MA; Scott Weidensaul, a natural history writer; and Wayne R. Petersen, Director of the Important Bird Area Program at the Massachusetts Audubon Society.



(Above) Norman Smith calms an agitated hawk.

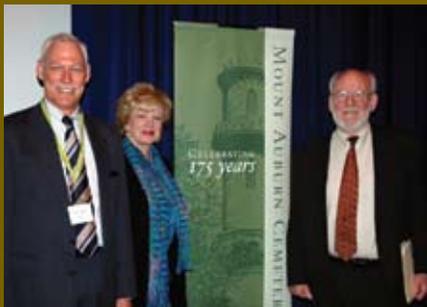


(Left, l to r) Laura Johnson, President of Massachusetts Audubon Society; Hamilton Coolidge (Westwood, MA), an Honorary Trustee of Mount Auburn; and his wife, Barbara, at the birding lecture.

May 15, 2007, “The Cemetery and the Park: Nature, The Designed Landscape and Urban Planning” was presented by Dr. Charles Beveridge, Series Editor, *The Papers of Frederick Law Olmsted*, and cultural landscape historian Arleyn Levee. With a capacity of 300, all of the 175th lectures had virtual standing-room-only audiences and were enthusiastically received. The speakers and all lecture attendees were the guests of Mount Auburn at wine and hors-d’oeuvres receptions following each of the seven lectures throughout the year.



(Above, right) Audience members talking before the lecture



(Left) Bill Clendaniel (l) with speakers Arleyn Levee and Charles Beveridge

Photos by Jennifer Johnston

April 10, 2007, “The Asian Connection,” the fifth in the lecture series, presented Daniel J. Hinkley, a celebrated West Coast horticulturist, plant explorer and author, discussing the many connections between the horticultural treasures of Mount Auburn Cemetery and the flora of the Far East.



(Above, right) Enjoying the reception after the Hinkley lecture



(Right) Longtime friends Dan Hinkley and Mount Auburn Trustee and horticulturist/author Tom Cooper (Watertown, MA).



(Left) Two of Boston’s Guardian Angels check out the Mount Auburn reception at the Boston Public Library after the Hinkley lecture.



May 19, 2007, Vocalist Jean Danton and pianist Thomas Stumpf performed works written by composers bur-

ied at Mount Auburn in Bigelow Chapel. The music of George Whitfield Chadwick, John Knowles Paine, Randall Thompson, Henry Worthington Loomis, Margaret Ruthven Lang, Henry Kimball Hadley, and Arthur Foote was played and enjoyed.

September 30, 2007, “Remembering E. Power Biggs” consisted of two free organ recitals by Richard Benefield, Deputy Director of the Harvard University Art Museums. The program presented the music of the preeminent American organist who is buried at Mount Auburn. The concerts took place at Adolphus Busch Hall at Harvard.



Bill Clendaniel to Retire from Mount Auburn

In letters sent in September to all Friends members and many professional colleagues, Bill Clendaniel and Board of Trustees Chair James M. Storey announced that Bill has chosen to take early retirement, effective July 1, 2008, after more than 20 years as the Cemetery's President.

"These years have flown by," Bill wrote. "With the help of a superb staff and Board of Trustees, we have accomplished much together." Jim wrote: "Bill's tenure at Mount Auburn has been a very successful one and we know it will be a great challenge to 'replace' him."

New initiatives led by Bill during his tenure have included creation of an award-winning Master Plan; significant landscape refurbishment projects, such as the new path and landscaping at Willow Pond and the creation of the Victorian-inspired garden at Bigelow Chapel Lawn; implementation of a professionally staffed preservation program and the building of the Preservation Services Building; the design and sale of a variety of innovative new interment spaces, including the Azalea walls and Aronia Garden, Spruce Knoll and Halcyon Garden; and the development of a comprehensive fundraising program through the Friends of Mount Auburn, which was organized as a 501(c)3 charitable trust in 1990. The Cemetery has received many awards during this time for its stewardship, including, most recently, the National Trust for Historic Reservation Trustee's Emeritus Award (see box on p 16). Bill himself received the Gold Medal of the Massachusetts Horticultural Society in 1997 for "leadership in restoring and revitalizing one of the greatest historical landscapes in the United States."

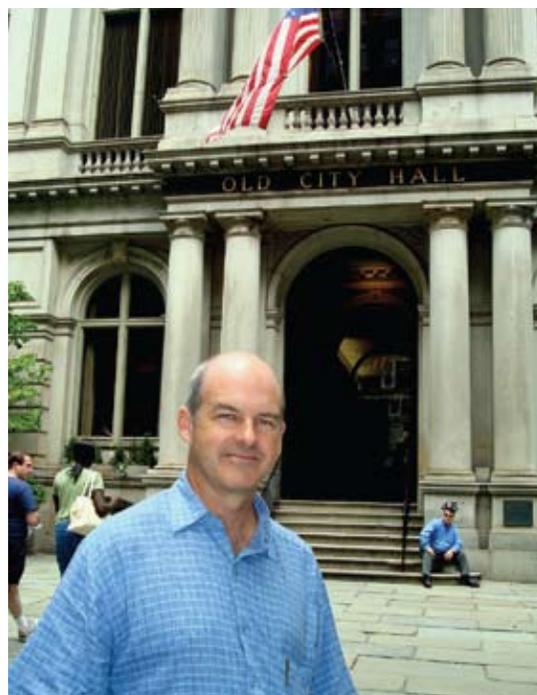
Sean McDonnell Joins Friends Trustees

Sean McDonnell believes that Mount Auburn Cemetery can offer the community something more than many historic environments, an "intact" landscape, looking, in some places as it did 150 years ago, almost frozen in time. And he should know. Sean is President of the Architectural Heritage Foundation (AHF), a not-for-profit historic preservation development firm instrumental in forging links between development and preservation interests for more than thirty years. He became a Friends Trustee because the role has deep meaning for him: "I think the Cemetery is a unique and spectacular place, a terrific resource that I hope to be associated with my whole life. And I'd like to see this resource prosper." He sees his work as a Trustee as complementing what he does in the business world. "I am mostly associated with commercial projects—saving historic mills in Lawrence, MA, and managing Old City Hall (on School Street, Boston). So it's nice to plug into the more 'spiritual' part of preservation." Sean lives with his wife, Mariana Webb, and their three daughters in Cambridge, very near the Cemetery.

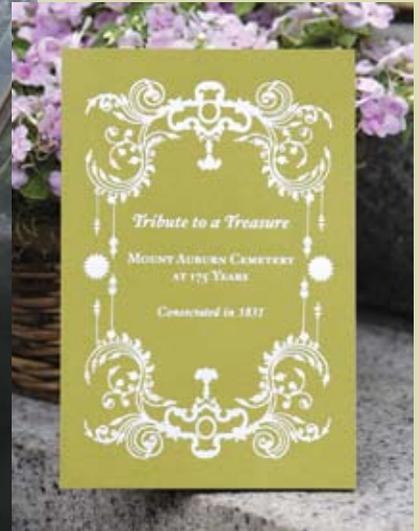
Bill has fostered an increased commitment to education and public outreach through the lectures, walks, and tours sponsored by the Friends and the creation of the Visitors Center, which will be completed this fall. He also conceived of and presided over many of the events of the 175th Anniversary of the Cemetery that reached new and diverse audiences and resulted in unprecedented visibility for Mount Auburn as a cultural organization.

Bill has spent more than 30 years managing private, non-profit organizations dedicated to preserving the natural and cultural heritage of Massachusetts and making these resources accessible to the public. Prior to coming to Mount Auburn he served for ten years as Deputy Director of The Trustees of Reservations in Massachusetts, the nation's oldest land trust. Before that he was Legal Counsel at the Massachusetts Coastal Zone Management Office. He is a graduate of Williams College and Harvard Law School and was a Rhodes Scholar at Merton College, Oxford. He is currently a member of the boards of the Massachusetts Historical Society and the Friends of the Public Garden in Boston and a Corporate Trustee of The Trustees of Reservations. He is a former trustee of Historic New England, Preservation Massachusetts, the National Association for Olmsted Parks, and the Alliance for Historic Landscape Preservation. He founded the Historic Cemeteries Alliance.

There will be a good-bye reception for Bill at the Cemetery in June 2008.



New Friends Trustee Sean McDonnell outside Old City Hall, Boston; Photo by Jennifer Johnston



A Rare Day in June

More than 300 people attended Mount Auburn's *Tribute to a Treasure Gala* on June 14, the culmination of our year-long 175th Anniversary celebration. On a cool spring evening when the Cemetery seemed especially verdant, Asa Gray Garden became an "outdoor room" where guests enjoyed drinks, hors d'oeuvres and chamber music by a student quartet from the Longy School. Nearby, bidding was brisk at the Silent Auction table. Our guests then walked up the hill to Bigelow Chapel Lawn, which had been transformed into an elegant dining terrace with tables set with a pink-and-silver color scheme, sheltered by a dramatic clear tent. There—amid topiary and sparkling, tiny white lights, between a magically floodlit Sphinx and the chapel's rose window—guests were served dinner while another group from Longy played jazz. After remarks by President Bill Clendaniel, Mayor Ken Reeves of Cambridge, and the featured speaker, documentary television producer Rick Sebak, Jim Storey toasted Mount Auburn. The festivities concluded with rousing songs by the New England Spiritual Ensemble, a Gospel quartet.



Joseph V. Roller II (Sudbury, MA), President and CEO of Cambridge Trust Company



(Left, l to r) Mount Auburn Trustee Chair Jim Storey of Boston, Bill Clendaniel, Hugo de Pedro of Concord, MA, Trustee Clemmie Cash of Wellesley, and Isabelle Storey



(Above) Former Forest Hills Cemetery president Bud Hanson and his wife Betty (Jamaica Plain, MA) look over items at the Gala's Silent Auction



(Above) The Gala registration table and Mount Auburn staff (l to r) Natalie Wampler, Caitlyn Landry, Susan Doolittle, Lisa Corbett, and Candace Currie

PHOTO BY MEGWIN SLOW



PHOTO BY MEGWIN SLOW

Program and Special Tour Highlights

Through late spring and all summer, Mount Auburn presented a number of varied walks and tours, some perennial events and others one-of-a-kind.

A group of 20 members of the **Friends of Fenway Court**, a donor association of the **Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum**, visited the Cemetery on May 16 with Bill Clendaniel, Vice President of Operations & Horticulture David Barnett, and Director of Education & Visitor Services Bree Harvey. Following their walking tour, which included a stop at the Gardner family tomb, the group gathered for refreshments in Bigelow Chapel.

Thirty Boston by Foot volunteer docents visited the Cemetery for a tour led by Bree on June 2. Their visit was offered as a training option for the docents, who lead tours of downtown Boston.

David Barnett, the well-known birder Bob Stymeist and naturalist Marjorie Rines led a group of 32 to explore Mount Auburn's "**Birds, Butterflies and Botany.**" Bree Harvey led the first in a series of evening hour-long summer strolls, which were well attended, with many young families present, while Visitor Services Specialist Dawnielle

Peck's "Discover Mount Auburn" was equally popular throughout the summer. Unique programs included Greenhouse Manager Maurene Simonelli's **workshop on medicinal plants** at the greenhouse. Bob Stymeist led his annual **Nighthawk Watches** at Washington Tower, the

22nd year of the always booked-up event. As part of "Cambridge Discovery Days," Dawnielle Peck led a literary walk, "Mount Auburn: A Muse to our Nation's Writers," attended by more than 40 people. On August 24 Bree hosted a tour focused on **African-American notables** buried at the Cemetery for a group of **first-year students from MIT**.

Mount Auburn hosted members of the newly formed New England Chapter of the Institute of Classical Architecture & Classical America on September 23. Curator of Historical Collections Meg Winslow, accompanied by Archivist Brian Sullivan, led the group on a walk titled "**The Arcadian Necropolis: A Tour of the Romantic Landscape and Classical Monuments of Mount Auburn Cemetery.**" A reception followed in Bigelow Chapel, where members viewed the newly restored North Window.



PHOTO BY JENNIFER JOHNSTON

Mount Auburn Wins National Trust for Historic Preservation Award

On October 4, the **National Trust for Historic Preservation** awarded Mount Auburn the **2007 Trustees Emeritus Award for Excellence in the Stewardship of Historic Sites**.



(L to r) Richard Moe, President of the National Trust for Historic Preservation, Bill Clendaniel and Jonathan Kemper, Chairman of the Board of Trustees, National Trust for Historic Preservation

"This is a wonderful recognition of Mount Auburn's many decades of leadership in maintaining a nationally significant historic site," says Mount Auburn President Bill Clendaniel, who traveled to St. Paul, MN, to receive the honor.

The award "recognizes achievement over a period of at least 25 years in any one or more of the following areas: promoting preservation through unique and effective programming, preservation and maintenance of historical structures and landscapes, interpretation and education programming for the public, and excellence in general or fiscal management, especially in challenging situations."

At Bill's invitation Graham Gund, Cambridge architect and a former trustee of the Trust; Charles Sullivan, executive director of the Cambridge Historical Commission; Rich Moylan, president of Green-Wood Cemetery in Brooklyn; Betsy Barlow Rogers, former president of the Central Park Conservancy and now president of the Foundation for Landscape Studies in New York; and Carl Nold, president of Historic New England, wrote letters of recommendation for us. Mount Auburn staffers Bree Harvey and Meg Winslow helped Bill prepare the extensive application.

The Cemetery also hosted the **Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, Council and Fellows** for a private tour on Sunday afternoon, October 14. The tour featured contemporary memorials and the Cemetery's many connections with the museum. Meg Winslow and Brian Sullivan welcomed the group. A reception followed in Bigelow Chapel.

The Funeral Consumers Alliance of Eastern Massachusetts, an organization that "protects a consumer's right to choose a dignified, meaningful, affordable funeral," held their annual meeting at Bigelow Chapel on October 27. The speaker, Joel Rabinowitz, executive director of Greensprings Natural Cemetery in Ithaca, NY, discussed the growing green burial movement, using Greensprings as an illustration.

Staff Activities

Plants Curator **Dennis Collins** attended the **5th International Symposium on the Taxonomy of Cultivated Plants** on October 15-19, 2007, in the botanic gardens on the campus of Wageningen University, about 50 miles southeast of Amsterdam. During the two decades since the first symposium, the field of taxonomy of cultivated plants has developed at an increasing pace, and its importance for society has become more and more evident. People from 13 countries and five continents attended the conference. Dennis Collins was appointed as the group's Secretary, responsible for managing information and official documents in the organization.

Preservation Specialist **David Gallagher** attended the **Association for Preservation Technology (APT)** conference, "Old World Technologies Adapting in the New World," on November 3-7 in San Juan, Puerto Rico, the site of a great many buildings with ancient stonework. He took a two-day workshop in "Traditional Lime and Brick Dust Mortars for Restoration" and some shorter seminars. Mount Auburn tries to use appropriate traditional materials in preservation work whenever possible and this lecture and hands-on workshop extends David's knowledge of traditional lime mortars.

David Barnett's two-year term as President of the American Public Gardens Association came to a successful completion at the end of the annual conference in Washington, D.C., June 30, 2007.

Archivist **Brian Sullivan** delivered a paper, "An Ornament to Our Brotherhood We Have Lost: Sorrow and Solace in Nineteenth-Century Harvard Student Diaries," at the Dublin Seminar on New England Folk Life held in Deerfield, MA, on June 15, 2007.



Bree Harvey (left), Director of Education & Visitor Services, with volunteers Ann Steinberg of Somerville and Angela Robins of Tufts University

The second annual Cemetery-wide volunteer appreciation event, a **Volunteer Appreciation Tea**, was held October 9, 2007, in Bigelow Chapel, attended by 30 staff members and volunteers. Bill Clendaniel spoke of how the Cemetery "loves to have volunteers in every area" and was "delighted to see so many people to thank." Susan Doolittle mentioned that some volunteers work diligently in two or three settings,

and Dennis Collins spoke of the amazing diversity of their backgrounds, "from MIT professors to high school students and everything in between." Bree Harvey announced that we will need docents in the new Visitors Center and that docent training sessions have begun.

In October Vice President of Development Piper Morris and Director of Education & Visitor Services Bree Harvey attended the Boston premiere of **Ben Affleck's** directorial debut, the movie *Gone Baby Gone*, starring **Casey Affleck**. The movie was partially filmed at Mount Auburn during July 2006. Ben had such fond memories of Mount Auburn from growing up in Cambridge that he wrote a scene, not in the original Dennis Lahane novel, that could be filmed at the Cemetery, where the Afflecks' grandmother is buried.



Bree Harvey in foreground; Ben Affleck background. Photo by Meg Winslow

Staff Changes

Bree Harvey, who has been creating and leading programs since 2001, was promoted to the new position of Director of Education & Visitor Services.

Candace Currie was promoted to the new position of Director of Planning & Cemetery Development. Candace has become an integral part of the Cemetery Services staff and is spending a good deal of time working with Bill Clendaniel, Richard Dalton and David Barnett on issues related to cemetery development. She continues to be the project manager for Birch Gardens (see Birch Gardens article on p 10).

With the retirement of Claude Benoit in June 2007, **Paul Walker** assumed the new position of Superintendent of Grounds, becoming responsible for the Grass/Grounds Maintenance Crew as well as the Arboriculture and Gardening Crews. **Jonathan Webb** was promoted to Arboriculture Supervisor, and **Darryl Sullivan** was hired to fill the vacant position of Gardening Supervisor. **Dennis Collins**, now Horticultural Curator, oversees the Greenhouse Crew in addition to his ongoing responsibilities supervising the Plant Records staff and horticulture volunteers. He has also taken over most of the critically important landscape design and lot owner relations tasks previously handled by Claude.

Alberto Parker has joined Mount Auburn as a Security Guard/Visitor Services Representative. He is a familiar face to employees and visitors, having worked here as a part-time security guard since August 2005.

In his new fulltime position he will work closely with the Education & Visitor Services department to provide visitor services in addition to his security responsibilities and join Visitor Services Representative Dawnielle Peck on information duty at the front entrance gate, covering the later hours when the Cemetery is open until dusk. Mount Auburn is open 365 days per year, welcoming 200,000 visitors annually.



Alberto Parker, left, security guard and new Visitor Services Representative, and Dawnielle Peck, Visitor Services Specialist. Photo by Jennifer Johnston

Wildflower Meadow

A habitat vital for many native and visiting wildlife has been created beneath one of Mount Auburn's oldest landmarks, Washington Tower. A wildflower meadow—funded in large part by a grant from the Anthony J. and Mildred D. Ruggiero Memorial Trust of Tucson, AZ—is nearly complete. Almost 10,000 plants—grasses, herbaceous perennials and shrubs—were installed this summer and in September the turf paths and a central viewing area were laid down. More plants need to be added next year, and the Friends is still seeking support for that work and for the three years of professional maintenance critical to project's long-term success.

The Wildflower Meadow will be an important new habitat at Mount Auburn. It is also a plant community that is becoming scarce in Massachusetts due to development, fragmentation of farmland, pollution, and competition from invasive plants. The Mount Auburn meadow will benefit many species of grassland birds, butterflies, insects and small mammals and will also contain a seep, a small water feature that is attractive to these animals.



(Top left) The new Wildflower Meadow below Washington Tower (September 2007). (Top right) Mulching the meadow just after its installation (August 2007). (Above) One of the turf paths (September 2007). Photos by Jennifer Johnston

Media Coverage

The June 17 *Boston Sunday Globe* featured an extensive article, "The history of ether, from six feet under," about anesthesia residents from Massachusetts General Hospital coming to Mount Auburn to visit the graves of some of the notable physicians and founders of their profession buried here. The article included photographs of the group at the Cemetery and images of the monuments of Oliver Wendell Holmes, William T.G. Morton, Charles T. Jackson, Henry Jacob Bigelow and Charles Bulfinch. Mount Auburn's Historical Resources Preservation Award from the Watertown Historical Commission was mentioned in the *Watertown Tab* on June 19.

The autumn issue of *Sanctuary*, the members' magazines of the **Massachusetts Audubon Society**, mentioned the Cemetery in an article, "The Courthouse Cooper's," by Karl Meyer. He wrote: "In early May (Mass. Audubon Field Ornithologist Simon) Perkins took a group out to Mount Auburn Cemetery in Cambridge, where birders watched a pair of Cooper's hawks chasing a red-tail. The chase strongly suggested that the Coops may have set up nesting somewhere within city limits."

Bill on the Road Again

President Bill Clendaniel traveled this past summer and fall to points near and far to speak about Mount Auburn and meet with peers in the cemetery, preservation, and horticulture worlds. On June 4 he attended the annual meeting of Preservation Massachusetts, held at historic Fenway Park, and on June 21 represented Mount Auburn at the annual medals dinner of the Massachusetts Horticultural Society at Elm Bank in Wellesley, MA. From June 22 through 30 he visited several botanical gardens, in most cases with their directors—Duke Farms, Hillsborough, NJ; Chanticleer, PA; Mt. Cuba Center, DE; Longwood, PA; River Farm, Alexandria, VA (American Horticultural Society); Mount Vernon, VA; the National Arboretum and United States Botanic Garden in Washington, D.C.; and Brookside Gardens, Wheaton, MD. He also attended the annual American Public Gardens Association (APGA) conference in Washington, D.C., on June 30, along with with Vice President of Operations & Horticulture (and retiring APGA President) David Barnett and Horticultural Curator Dennis Collins.

Bill spoke on October 16 to the Garden Club of Concord, MA, on "Mount Auburn Cemetery at 175 Years."

Prominent Japanese Funeral Directors Visit Mount Auburn

Eight Japanese funeral directors visited Mount Auburn on October 21, 2007, as part of a nationwide tour to learn about “excellence in management within all aspects of funeral service.” The seven-day visit, arranged through The Dodge Company of Cambridge (founded in 1893 and the largest supplier of funeral equipment in the United States) included stops in cemeteries in St. Louis and southern California and a tour of the National Museum of Funeral History in Houston, TX. Most Japanese funerals end in cremation, so the group wanted to see how Americans are dealing with the increasing popularity of that practice.

Craig Caldwell of The Dodge Company chose Mount Auburn as a stop because of “the vast difference between a Japanese cemetery and Mount Auburn. It is not common to find a garden setting cemetery in Japan, nor is it often that a Japanese cemetery would have a wide range of monuments and differing burial areas, such as mausoleums, ground for burials, and so on. And their culture has such a great respect for the past that I thought Mount Auburn would be a perfect fit for their visit.”

Director of Education & Visitor Services Bree Harvey gave the group a tour of the grounds and the crematory. Coming from land-scarce Japan, the delegation was in awe of the spaciousness and beauty of the Cemetery. “They thought it was just stunning,” says Vice President of Cemetery Services Richard Dalton. “For them to experience this ‘park’ was extraordinary.”

In Japan, the funeral industry and the wedding industry are run as joint businesses. Three or four companies host the majority of funerals in the country, in “funeral halls.” Katsuhiko Matsui, the president of Sun-Life Corporation, one of Japan’s largest such companies, visited Mount Auburn with the group. The average cost of a funeral in Japan is \$25,000, and people save for this milestone throughout their lives. Japanese funeral customs are becoming more westernized, and funeral directors in Japan are replicating certain aesthetic aspects of, for example, British customs. One company has imported two British Victorian Gothic chapels, stone-by-stone, to be used as settings for weddings.

On the other hand, in this era of globalization and marked cultural diversity within the United States, Richard Dalton stresses that Mount Auburn, too, can learn from other cultures as it increasingly accommodates people of diverse traditions.



(L to r) Mount Auburn’s Director of Annual Giving Jennifer Gilbert, Curator of Historical Collections Meg Winslow, and photographer Richard Cheek (of Belmont, MA). Photos by Jennifer Johnston

On September 26, Bill Clendaniel spoke at a dinner at the downtown Harvard Club in Boston on “Mount Auburn Cemetery at 175 Years.” In conjunction with the talk, the club hosted an exhibition of color photographs taken by Richard Cheek featuring seasonal views of the Cemetery, dated 1996–2007. The exhibition was curated by Curator of Historical Collections Meg L. Winslow, and ran from September 26 to November 13.



PHOTO COURTESY OF DAVID BOSTOK

Visitors come to Mount Auburn for many reasons, people interested in birding, history, botany, gardening, art and architecture. This summer we had a request from an Englishman, David Bostok, for permission to propose marriage to his girlfriend atop Washington Tower. We told him he could and later we received the following email: “It was a perfect evening! She said yes! And was completely surprised and overwhelmed by the setting. Thank you so much for allowing me this privilege.”



Florence Ladd at Mount Auburn

Mount Auburn Visit

By Florence Ladd

When copper-leafed November comes calling for remembrance of saints and souls, I call on New England's late luminaries, the celebrated dead in Mount Auburn's parkland of graves, avenues of monuments, tributes in granite to painters, preachers, politicians, and poets eminent in their time.

At rest on Bellwort Path, Amy Lowell the cigar-smoking Brahmin Sappho claimed a summit for sisters in poetry's high mountains, citing the Greek Sappho, Elizabeth Barrett Browning and Emily Dickinson "great... marvelously strange," but, "none of you has any word for me," said Amy.

She hoped "some other woman with an itch for writing" would advance her poetic trek. In our time she would have known Rukeyser, Levertov, Jordan, and Lorde who unbuttoned the Muse, unbound her feet guiding her steady ascent to higher peaks singing of sisterhood.

A Portrait of the Poet as a Neighbor

BY STEPHEN H. ANABLE, *Communications Coordinator & Writer*

DR. FLORENCE LADD IS SITTING IN HER SUN-FLOODED living room off Brattle Street, a veritable gallery of art—some purchased from painters she admires, others, sculptures of ceramic hippopotamuses in jellybean-bright glazes and an Egyptian-style hawk, the work of her husband, Bill Harris. Florence taught psychology at Simmons and Harvard, served as dean at the MIT School of Architecture & Planning, dean of students at Wellesley College, and director of the Mary Ingraham Bunting Institute at Harvard. She worked for Oxfam and the United Nations. She has also nurtured, discussed and created art for most of her life, being the author of the novel, *Sarah's Psalm*, and numerous stories, essays and poems. She has lived with Mount Auburn Cemetery as her neighbor and muse for almost five decades.

"Mount Auburn Visit" was written after a walk through the Cemetery as a spontaneous expression of her feelings. "I use those walks for inspiration," Florence says, "and

certainly going through the Cemetery brings me closer to thinking what life is about." She considers Mount Auburn "the area's most beautiful park. I know it best in spring and fall. I go there with the intention of visiting old friends. I used to take walks there with a friend, and I'd say, 'Let's go visit the Longfellows.' And certainly I've focused on those buried there that were contributors to the arts and the literary heritage of New England." Florence's husband shares her interest in the Cemetery, especially in Edmonia Lewis's statue, *Hygeia*, on the grave of Dr. Harriot Hunt, one of the nation's first female physicians. Lewis's biographer, Marilyn Richardson, is a family friend.

Says Ladd: "The history of a region is laid out in cemeteries. You can learn something about family relationships from the monuments, about longevity when you look at those dates, and about sociology by who's there and who's not. I always have to see the enormous monument (at Mount Auburn) dedicated to Mary Baker Eddy. Just the scale of it speaks to me about the importance of one woman—and about magnifying the presence of women."

The Future is Green:

ARRANGING A BEQUEST FOR ECOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT AT MOUNT AUBURN

Stephen Fitzsimmons, Ph.D., of Cambridge, wanted to make a gift to Mount Auburn that would make a difference in a major area of operations, in particular helping the Cemetery take a proactive approach toward ecological issues and in so doing encouraging others to do the same. As a result, he is making a gift from his estate to create the Mount Auburn Ecological Challenge Fund for Scientific and Strategic Management.

The Fund will produce annual distributions in perpetuity to support periodic assessments of Mount Auburn's natural habitats, studying water, soil, plants, animals, birds and insects—as well as ad hoc topics of special interest at any point, such as the local impact of global warming, drought, blights, and more. Dr. Fitzsimmons was very careful and thorough in outlining his wishes, while giving the Cemetery broad discretion as to how it can spend the income from the Fund.

Steve's first interest in things ecological was inspired decades ago by reading the Rachel Carson classic *Silent Spring* and the writings of biologist Barry Commoner. A 1958 graduate of Northwestern University, he also earned a master's degree in psychology at Washington State University and a doctorate in social and industrial psychology at the University of Houston. He went on to a career in public policy research with Abt Associates, Inc., of Cambridge, studying a broad range of issues, includ-

PHOTO BY JENNIFER JOHNSTON



Stephen Fitzsimmons in his Cambridge, MA home.

ing analyzing domestic and international government programs and activities regarding their rationale, goals, operations, accomplishments, and renewal. He is the author of numerous papers and articles.

In arranging his bequest to Mount Auburn, Dr. Fitzsimmons summed up his wishes by saying he wanted to give the Cemetery “the rules and tools” for meeting environmental challenges in the future. “My own interests as a scientist include ecology and the development of a holistic approach to ecological preservation and development,” says Dr. Fitzsimmons. “I invite others to join me in helping the Cemetery. That’s why I call this a ‘challenge fund.’”

***For further information or to make a gift, please contact:
Priscilla P. Morris, Vice President of Development, Mount Auburn Cemetery,
580 Mount Auburn Street, Cambridge, MA 02138,
617-607-1919; pmorris@mountauburn.org.***



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Upcoming Events

✧ Candle Lighting Service

Tuesday, December 18, 3:30 PM, Story Chapel

Our traditional holiday service includes songs, music, and remarks by a guest speaker. After the service, everyone will place their lighted candles in a circle around the fountain in Asa Gray Garden, then walk to Bigelow Chapel for refreshments and conversation. This is FREE program with a nominal cost for candles. Those who are unable to attend may arrange for a candle to be lit by calling 617-547-7105.

✧ Discover Mount Auburn

Saturdays, December 1, January 5, February 2, March 1, April 5, May 3, 2:00 PM

One of the country's most significant designed landscapes, Mount Auburn combines the arts of horticulture, architecture and sculpture with the beauty of nature. These introductory tours, held on the first Saturday of each month, focus on stories about the Cemetery's history, notable monuments and the lives of those buried here. \$5 for members, \$10 non-members.

**Friends of Mount Auburn Cemetery
580 Mount Auburn Street
Cambridge, Massachusetts 02138-5517**

www.mountauburn.org • 617-547-7105

✧ Understanding Cremation—A Conversation

Saturdays, January 19 and April 26, 1:00 PM

Mount Auburn's Crematory Manager Walter Morrison, Jr., presents a brief overview about cremation, then answers questions about the procedures and cost and options for a permanent placement for cremated remains. The event includes an option to tour the Crematory. Bigelow Chapel. FREE.

✧ Mount Auburn Book Club

Each month, the new Mount Auburn Book Club reads a book, fiction or non-fiction, which speaks to one of Mount Auburn's many facets—history, horticulture, nature, and the lives of those commemorated here. The group meets for 90 minutes on the second Thursday of each month, at 10:00 AM in Story Chapel. Director of Education & Visitor Services Bree Harvey will lead the group. Coffee and tea will be served. FREE.

Book Club dates are:

- **Thursday, January 10, 10:00 AM:** Sarah Stewart Taylor's mystery, *Mansions of the Dead*
- **Thursday, February 14, 10:00 AM:** Stephen Kendrick and Paul Kendrick's study, *Sarah's Long Walk: The Free Blacks of Boston and How Their Struggle for Equality Changed America*
- **Thursday, March 13, 10:00 AM:** John May's novel, *Poe & Fanny*

Mount Auburn Online

Visit www.mountauburn.org to:

- See the complete list of the talks, walks and special events of the Friends of Mount Auburn
- Register for any of our upcoming programs
- Sign up for our free monthly e-newsletter to receive programming announcements by email and learn about other Cemetery happenings

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